DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 601 CS 213 512

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TITLE Characters in Time Travel Fiction as Historical Guides.
PUB DATE [92]
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescent Literature; Annotated Bibliographies; Childrens Literature; Class Activities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Fiction; History; Interdisciplinary Approach; Literary Genres; *Models; *Thematic Approach
IDENTIFIERS Historical Background; *Historical Fiction; *Time Travel

ABSTRACT

Based on the idea that the literary genre of historical time travel fiction can provide the reader/student with a frame of reference for studying history, this paper presents a model for thematic integration of the curriculum which uses a work of literature as its central focus. According to the paper, this thematic approach to the content areas can serve as a springboard for inquiry, as a basis for writing assignments, and as a representation of the integration of the fiction with history texts, other non-fiction works, and other forms of visual media. The model described in the paper outlines classroom and research activities to augment concepts related to events in the novel "The Root Cellar" by Janet Lunn--activities in language, social studies, science, math, and art and music. The paper also contains a 22-item annotated bibliography of historical fiction time travel literature. (NKA)

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CHARACTERS IN TIME TRAVEL FICTION AS HISTORICAL GUIDES

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"Someday we are going to find the way to step out of our tiny
tiny place on this river, step across, or into, all of that river of time."
Norma Fox Mazer, Saturday the Twelfth of October

The movie entitled "Somewhere in Time" is set on Mackinac Island in the Straits of Mackinac, some one hundred fifty miles from where we live. The film's main character travels to the past by going to the place from which he can make his backward journey. Historical time travel is not restricted to the screen. Historical time travel fiction makes the journey possible my melding time travel with recorded history and yields a new genre to be added to our rich literature. Historical time travel fiction, or what Sheila Egoff (1988) refers to as past-time fantasy, has several unique qualities and characteristics.

First the characterization of historical fiction time travel offers unique opportunities for the author and the reader. Although the main character will travel in time, the stories usually begin with the main character living in the present. The contemporary character acts as our guide in the past. This protagonist is often unhappy with his or her present life, and therefore is ready to run away or escape the present. A recent divorce, a move to a new house, or a stay with unfamiliar relatives are examples of situations some main characters find themselves in, resulting in the character's feelings of loneliness and alienation.

The contemporary reader feels a strong connection with this main character, and this familiarity allows the reader to more readily travel back in time with the main character once the time travel element enters the story line. Because the reader travels with the character, we believe that the ability for the reader to become immersed in the action and events of the story is very compelling.

In contrast to historical fiction, the main character first lives in the present which allows the character to comment on the differences and similarities between the character's original time and the historical time.

A second characteristic of historical time travel fiction relates to the mans by which the character travels to the past. The only magical of

fantastic element in these stories is the time travel which is achieved by the use of some physical means or object. Abigail holds a piece of yellowed lace in Ruth Park's Playing Beatie Bow, Rose travels back in time when she stands on the root cellar steps in the shadow of a tree in The Root Cellar by Janet Lunn, and in Kit Pearson's A Handful of Time, the main character winds a pocket watch and stays in the past until the watch runs down.

The third characteristic of historical time travel fiction worth noting is the travel of the main character, and therefore the reader, to a specific historical time or place. Through this genre the reader can experience the War between the States, ancient Greece, a World War II concentration camp, or an English mining town. These historical times and places are brought to life by the characters who visit them rather than by descriptions of isolated facts and events as found in content area textbooks. The view of the historic time through the eyes of a character adds a depth of understanding and insight into the day to day routine of the period not typically available through more traditional textbooks and materials.

It is this full understanding of the emotions, the personalities, the human decisions that were made that adds the depth to any study of history. Using the genre of historical time travel fiction with children has the potential for providing children and us with a frame of reference for the study of history. It also allows us to approach the content areas thematically. The use of themes facilitates integration of the curriculum which is decidedly preferable to compartmentalized learning. A model for thematic integration which uses a piece of literature as its central focus follows. This serves as a springboard for inquiry, as a basis for writing assignments, and as a representation of the integration of the fiction with history texts, other non-fiction works, and other forms of visual media.

Activities to augment the concepts related to the events in The Root Cellar, organized by content area:

Language

Do an interpretive reading of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Write a diary entry which might have been written by a soldier from the North, by a soldier from the South.

Debate the possibility of time travel.

Write diary entries for each of the days travelled.

Describe or chart the process followed in locating a missing person.

Social Studies

Determine the number of Canadian soldiers who fought in the American Civil War.

Map the locations of the major battles of the Civil War. Be sure to include the battles referred to in the book.

Explore cultural customs which relate to the concept of time. (Ex. manana)

Prepare a timeline showing the main character's "jump" in time.

Prepare two timelines comparing how time passed for the main character in the present, and how time passed for her in the period of the Civil War.

Compare how a person would spend a typical day in the present and how a person would spend a typical day in the Civil War era.

Select an era in history which you would like to visit. Explain your choice. Describe your life there.

Prepare a map showing the route that the main character travelled in the book.

Plan a trip following the same route using today's means of transportation.

Research the history of counting time.

Discuss the ways in which women's roles have changed since the 1860s.

Science

Research the medical facilities available during the Civil War era.

Explore how nature affects our way of determining the lengths of units of time.

Build a machine which measures time.

Math

Chart the number of casualties from the major battles of the Civil War.

Calculate how much it would cost today to take the same trip as the main character took.

Art/Music

Re-create the Civil War uniforms of both the North and the South.

On a map, draw scenes which summarize the events which occurred at each stop on the trip.

Sing songs from the Civil War era.

Bibliography of Historical Fiction Time Travel Literature

Themes with historical emphasis:

Avi. (1988). Something Upstairs. New York: Avon.
Kenny helps Caleb, a slave from 1700 New England, solve Caleb's murder but he must travel back to prerevolutionary times to find the answers to the mystery.

Feelings, T. (1991). Tommy Traveler in the World of Black History. Black Butterfly Children's Books.
After reading a book on black history, Tommy dreams himself into what he has just read. A full-color comic book format portrays the lives of Phoebe Fraunces, Emmet Till, Aesop, Frederick Douglass, Crispus Attucks, and Joe Louis.

Jensen, D. (1989). Riddle of Penncroft Farm. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Lars, having recently moved to Valley Forge, meets Geordie who tells stories about the Revolutionary War as if he was an eye witness. A mystery and a missing will add to the tension as Lars tries to solve the many riddles he discovers.

Lunn, J. (1981). Root Cellar. New York: Puffin.
Rose, unhappy in her new home, wanders into a root cellar and finds herself transported to the world of the 1860's. Although living in Canada, Rose and the people she meets are significantly affected by the American Civil War and find

themselves on a journey to save their friend Will. The journey takes the characters and us as readers from Canada to Richmond, Virginia.

Park, R. (1983). Playing Beatie Bow. New York: Atheneum.
A children's playground jingle and a piece of yellow crochet fabric bring Beatie Bow, a child from Victorian 1873, to the present. Abigail, a lonely Australian teenager, follows Beatie back to Beatie's time, and the reader discovers, through Abigail's eyes, the challenges of living in poverty in Sydney, Australia. Judged as the Best Australian Children's Book of 1981, this books is about time, poverty, and the nature of love.

Silverberg, R. (1990). Letters from Atlantis. New York: Atheneum.
A mental time traveler from the twenty-first century, Roy inhabits the mind of the crown prince of Atlantis, learns the secrets of that fabled continent, and tries to avert its destiny. This brilliant story is told through letters from Roy to a twenty-first-century friend. Although travel is to a fictional location and time in history, the reader's curiosity relative to the legend of Atlantis will be stimulated.

Thomas, J. R. (1989). The Princess and the Pigpen . New York: Clarion.
In a reverse of typical time travel, Elizabeth, feverish with pneumonia, travels forward from 17th century London to a pigpen in 20th century Iowa. She must convince the farmer's family as to who she really is and she must take back penicillin that will cure her mother. Through Elizabeth's eyes, we see the contrasts between 17th century life and that of the present.

Westall, R. (1978). The Devil on the Road. New York: Greenwillow.
While seeking shelter from a sudden rainstorm in an old barn, a young motorcyclist finds himself catapulted into a mid-17th century England troubled by witch hunts.

Yolen, J. (1988). Devil's Arithmetic. New York: Viking.
Hannah travels back in time from contemporary New Rochelle, New York, to a Polish village in 1942. Nazi soldiers take her and the other villagers away to a concentration camp. The reader travels with Hannah through this unforgettable experience of life and death, courage and survival.

Emphasis on other themes:

Cameron, E. (1973). The Court of the Stone Children. New York: Dutton.
In this story, time travel is used to explore the concept of time rather than the understanding of any particular time period. Dominique, a girl from the time of Napoleon, resides in the museum which now holds all of her household possessions. Dominique is restless due to an undeserved murder charge placed on her father long ago until a girl from the present helps her find the answers.

Conrad, P. (1989). My Daniel. New York: Harper and Row.
Although told as a flashback of a grandmother's memories, the story of a Nebraska brother and sister's discovery of dinosaur bones becomes so real to the reader that one feels as if one has traveled back in time to the prairie days of Nebraska.

Conrad, P. (1991). Stonewords: A Ghost Story. New York: Harper Collins Children's Books.
Zoe's best friend is named Zoe Louise who is actually a ghost. Zoe has been playing with Zoe Louise since she first moved in with her grandparents when she was 4. A

hundred years before, Zoe Louise and her family had lived in the old farmhouse. As the years pass, Zoe grows older, and Zoe Louise doesn't. But Zoe Louise does begin to change in terrible ways. Zoe must travel back in time 100 years to help her friend.

Cresswell, H. (1971). Up the Pier. New York: Macmillan.
When visiting her aunt in 1971, Carrie discovers a family from 1921 living on a bleak pier amid screeching seagulls. Carrie outwits the magician who had cast a magic spell on the family and helps them return to the past.

Duncan, L. (1985). Locked in Time. New York: Dell.
Unsuspecting 17-year-old Nore Robbins goes to an old Louisiana plantation to spend the summer with her father and new stepmother, Lisette. Nore soon realizes that Lisette's teenage children are part of something terribly sinister.

Farmer, P. (1985). Charlotte Sometimes. New York: Dell.
A bed in a private boarding school for girls serves as the vehicle for time travel. Charlotte finds that she has exchanged places and time with Clare, a boarding school resident in 1918.

Lively, P. (1974). The House in Norham Gardens. New York: Dutton.
Clare discovers a painted shield taken from New Guinea in the early 1900's. The ideas of the markings and the symbols they represent begin to take over her dreams. By reading her anthropologist Grandfather's journals of his trip to New Guinea, Clare begins to understand the cultural significance of the shield.

Mazer, N. F. (1975). Saturday the Twelfth of October. New York: Delacorte.
Transported back to a time of cave people, a young girl struggles with the onset of womanhood. She feels isolated and alone before and during her time travel adventures, and she feels even further alone and alienated when she returns and no one believes her story.

Pearce, P. (1958). Tom's Midnight Garden. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
While visiting his aunt and uncle, Tom discovers that in this house time stands still at midnight. Tom meets Hattie, a link from the past who turns out to also be a part of the present.

Pearson, K. (1987). A Handful of Time. New York: Penguin.
A Canadian author Patricia goes back in time to a summer on the lake 35 years before. The focus of this book, by a Canadian author, is not on the history of the time but on the understanding of current family relationships by looking at their past through time travel. Patricia is able to observe her mother as a child, and she is then better able to understand and appreciate her.

Peck, R. (1989). Voices After Midnight. New York: Dell.
Brothers Chad and Luke slip in and out of a wintery 1888 in New York City when they begin to hear voices in the rooms of their rented town house. The book focuses more on the relationships of the family who used to live at the town house location rather than the historical time period itself.

Sauer, J. (1943). Fog Magic. New York: Viking.
The fog has always been fascinating to Greta, and she has been given the gift of understanding which allows her to see and meet people who lived in her area 100 years ago.

Wells, R. (1987). Through the Hidden Door. Scholastic.
Barney Pennimen, an outcast at a private boys' school in the East, becomes friends with Snowy Cobb, a strange fellow student who has discovered a huge, secret cave. Together the boys unearth the relics of a rare civilization and learn the value of friendship.

Other references:

Egoff, Sheila. (1988). Worlds Within. Chicago: American Library Association.